



Making San Francisco Bay Better

September 29, 2006

Dan Airola
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SUBJECT: Comments on the Scientific Review of Biological Resources Impacts
and Proposed Mitigation for the Potrero Hills Landfill Phase II Expansion
(BCDC Permit No. MD88-09)

Dear Mr. Airola:

Thank for your submittal, on behalf of the independent science panel, of the draft report from the scientific review panel, which analyzes the impacts of the proposed Potrero Hills Landfill Inc.'s Phase II expansion and the mitigation to offset these impacts. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 of this document were received via email on August 29, 2006. Chapter 4 of the document was received via email on September 21, 2006. Listed below are our comments on the document and additional questions that we have for the panelists. These questions and comments fall into two categories: (1) questions to be addressed by all of the panelists; and (2) questions directed at individual panelists.

Questions to be Addressed by all Panelists

1. There were several specific details of the proposed project that were not available for your review prior to writing the draft report. These project details are as follows: (a) the installation of a 3,000-square-foot, 30-foot-tall power plant structure within the Griffith Ranch parcel; (b) the placement of 26,000 cubic yards of material to create a screening berm for the power plant over a 280,000-square-foot (6.5 acre) area within the Griffith Ranch parcel; (c) the installation of 7,000-foot-long, above-ground power line from the power plant west to the entrance of the landfill; (d) the installation of a 400-foot-long, above-ground power line from the power plant in a southeasterly direction to the existing PG&E line; (e) the installation of a new road (dimensions still unknown) across the Griffith Ranch parcel to provide access the power plant; (f) the use of Scally Road by vehicles to access the power plant location during and after construction of the facility; and (g) the installation of a new sedimentation control basin, water well, water conveyance line, water tanks, and screening berms to hide the water tanks

(dimensions of all components still unknown) on the Griffith Ranch parcel. A revised site plan depicting most of these features is being provided with this letter.

Given that these project details were missing during your original review, do you believe it is necessary to conduct additional fieldwork or analyses to evaluate the impacts of these project components on the expansion and mitigation areas? Do you need any additional information from Potrero Hills Landfill, Inc. to adequately evaluate the impacts of the project?

2. Site visits and surveys conducted by each of you at the expansion and mitigation areas were limited to a few months this summer. Do you believe it is important to survey the Potrero Hills during winter and spring months for an adequate understanding of the value of the botanic resources, ecology, and animal species and of the project impacts? Or, do you believe the review you have undertaken adequately assess the values and project impacts?
3. Can you identify for us those pieces of information, recommendations, and conclusions that you have provided that are new and were not provided or identified in the certified EIR?

Questions for Individual Panelists

1. Ayzik Someshch: Botanical Resources

- a. You indicate that at least 33 acres of 100 percent native grassland should be restored for mitigation to offset the impacts of the proposed expansion on grasslands. Do you have any suggestions on the acreage for mitigation of the two special-status species and sensitive plant communities or is this acreage included in the 33 acres?
- b. You have focused on the loss of native grassland species for the purpose of mitigation. However, the project will result in the loss of approximately 600 acres of valley bottom and sloping hillside grasslands for the duration of the Phase I and Phase II project. Do you think the loss of the larger overall acreage of grasslands should be mitigated?
- c. Other than controlling for exotics on the wet meadow in the Southern Hills parcel, do you have any suggestions for how to restore and manage this area for native plants?
- d. In your introduction section, we would like you to delete the phrase "as they relate to BCDC policies under Solano County's LPP."

2. Pamela Muick: Vegetation Resources and Grazing Management

- a. You state that the mitigation for impacts to Spring Branch Creek is outside of its existing watershed. Is this because the mitigation involves improvements outside the valley on the Director's Guild and Griffith Ranch parcels? Please explain.
- b. Will grazing and the movement of livestock across the mitigation parcels have an adverse impact on these habitats and thus the value of the mitigation?

3. Brad Shaffer: California Tiger Salamander

- a. You indicate that you would be willing to offer comments on the impact of the proposed project on reptiles and other amphibians. We would appreciate you providing this information to us.
- b. What additional work would be necessary to evaluate breeding sites and populations that may be impacted by the mitigation areas but are not currently controlled by the landfill? Is it possible to estimate how the lack of this information impacts your current analysis in terms of the value of the mitigation areas?
- c. Would the construction of the proposed 0.35-acre excavated pond adjacent to Pond 7 on the Southern Hills parcel provide any value as CTS habitat or would its construction have an adverse impact on CTS?
- d. Do you think mitigation for CTS at/near the impacted sites in the Potrero Hills Valley would be important, or could it occur at a distance from the impacted area?

4. David Shuford: Birds

- a. Do you think the falcon brought in to control gulls would have an adverse effect on native raptors?
- b. You comment that the effect of night lighting on birds would be negligible because lights are also present in nearby cities; however, the Potrero Hills Valley is an isolated "island" with undeveloped land all around, including the wetlands of the Suisun Marsh to the east, south and west, and agricultural land and vernal pools to the north. Do you think this "island"

of light would have a potentially significant effect on the movement of waterfowl and other birds between the vernal pools, upland grasslands, and tidal marshes at night?

- c. Other possible impacts to birds from the operation of the landfill due to noise, dust, and movement of equipment were not addressed in your report. We would appreciate your opinion on these issues.
- d. Your chart 5-2 identifies six birds that are state "fully protected." Do you believe the landfill expansion would result in a "take" of any of these species?

Thank you for all of the work you have done to help keep this review process moving forward. We appreciate the efforts of all of the panel members and look forward to receiving responses to our comments and questions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 352-3622.

Sincerely,

JENN FEINBERG
Coastal Program Analyst

Enc.

JF/mm

cc: Steve Peterson, ESP
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